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# 'THE OTHERS':

## Sex Offenders' Social Experiences of Hostel Accommodation

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Centre for Research in the Social Sciences

With thanks to Bangor University

# Today:

- Aim =
    - Explore the ways in which sex offenders' experience life in Probation Approved Premises (hostels) when preparing for release from prison to the community
    - Particular focus on informal social structures and relationships
  - Sex offender =
    - Anyone convicted of a sexual offence under the SOA 1997 or 2003
    - Residing in the hostel in the fieldwork period
-

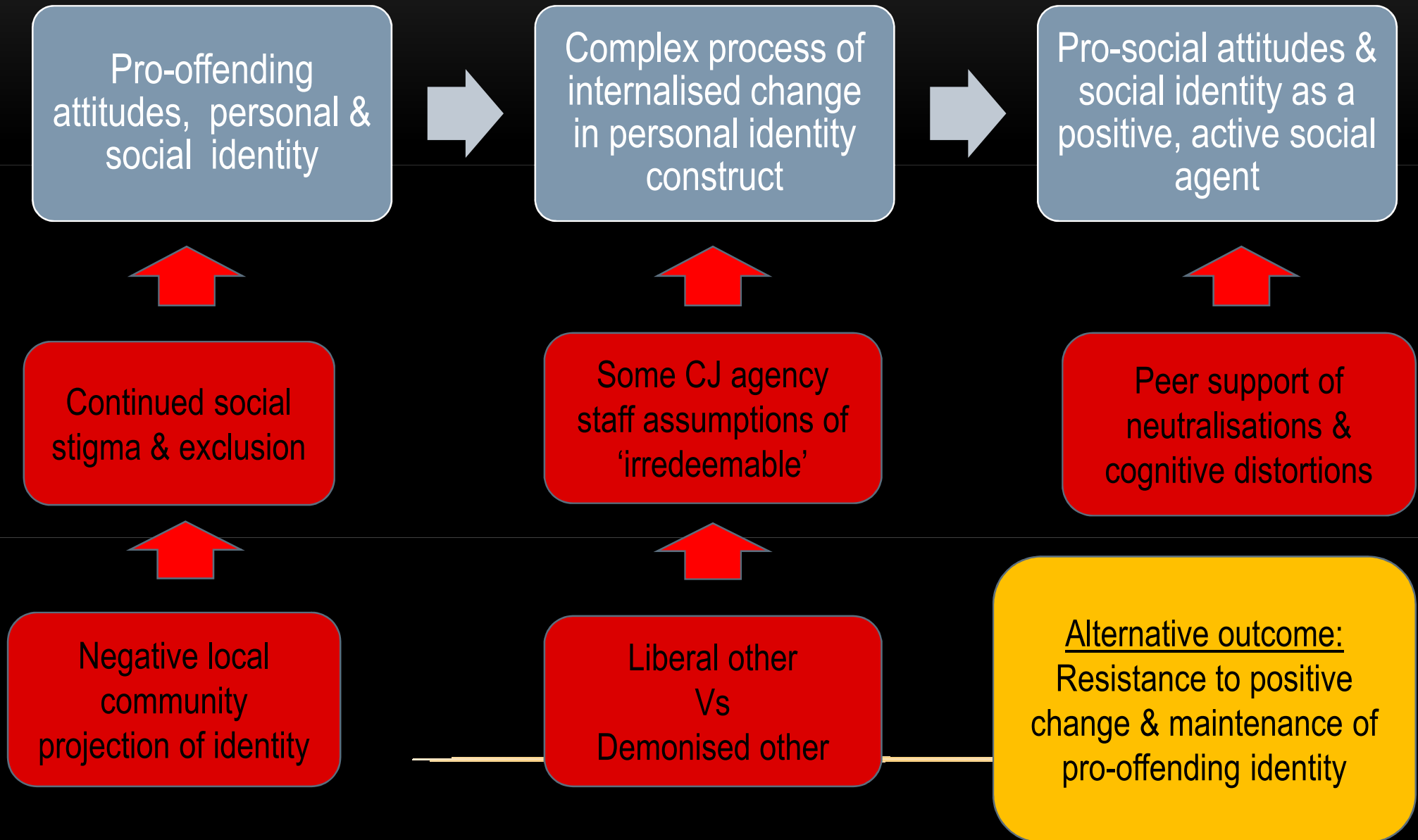
# The Study:

- Ethnographic study of the experiences of sex offenders living in a PAP over 21 months:

Type of data collected	Number of data collection points
Observation in hostel (including informal interviews)	57
Interviews with residents	24
Interviews with Staff	17

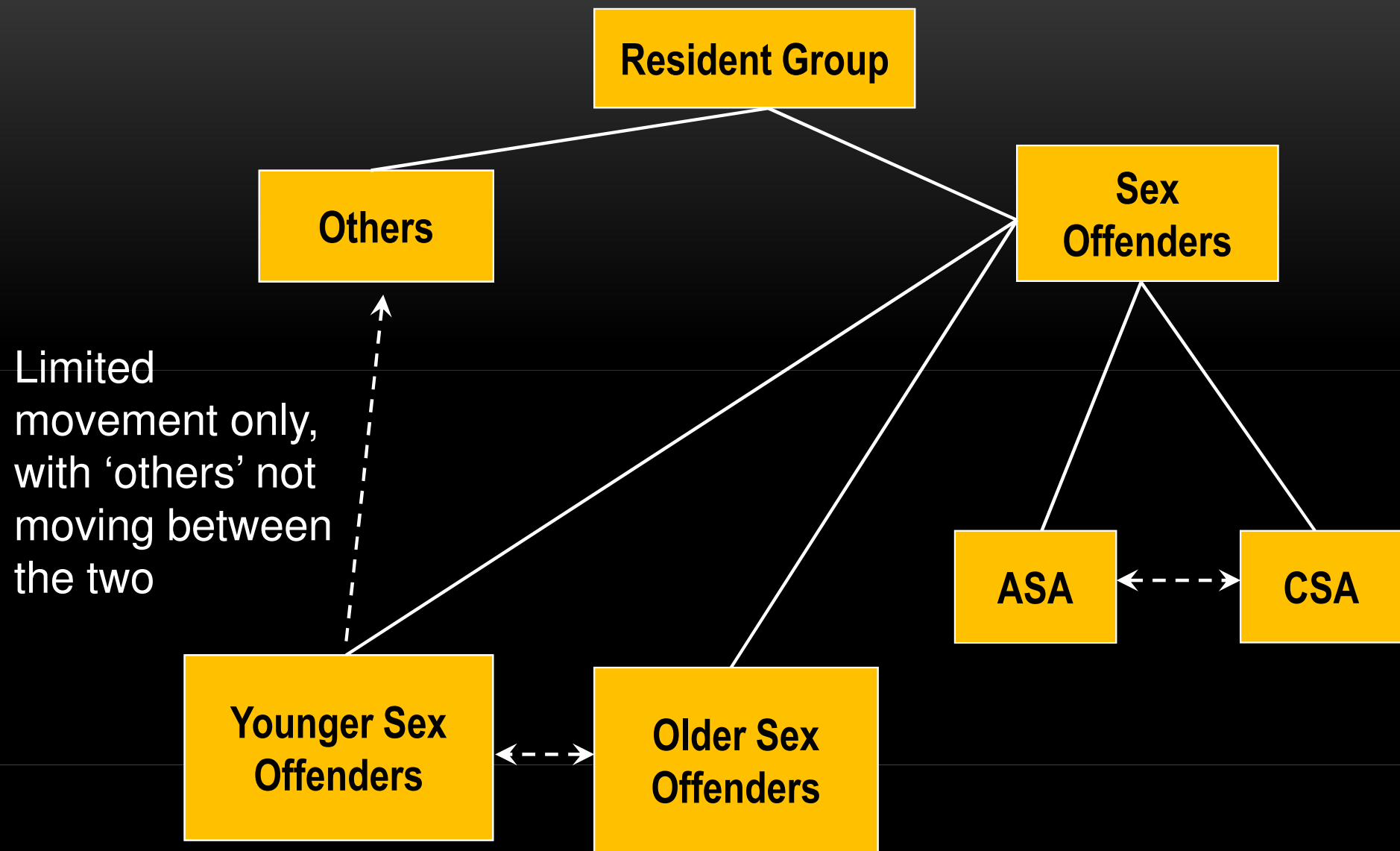
- ~~Mixed hostel setting for high risk offenders:~~
  - insular, secretive, isolated

# Research on sex offenders & reintegration:



# Findings: social grouping

- Foundation of social identities
  - Shared cultural values and group identity
- “you still get the same groups forming [as in prison]. Those on drugs and the others. You know what I mean. (Jim, csa)
- “those paedo’s” (Paul, staff)
  - Drug addict / other = non sex offender
  - Other / sex offender = sex offender
  - Younger v older residents
- “I say I’m here for violence and they believe me, it helps that I do have a temper on me. Then they leave me alone [...] (Jack csa)



A solid line denotes additional membership of other groups.  
A dotted line denotes potential movement between groups.  
Arrows denote the direction of movement on dotted lines.

# Significance of grouping

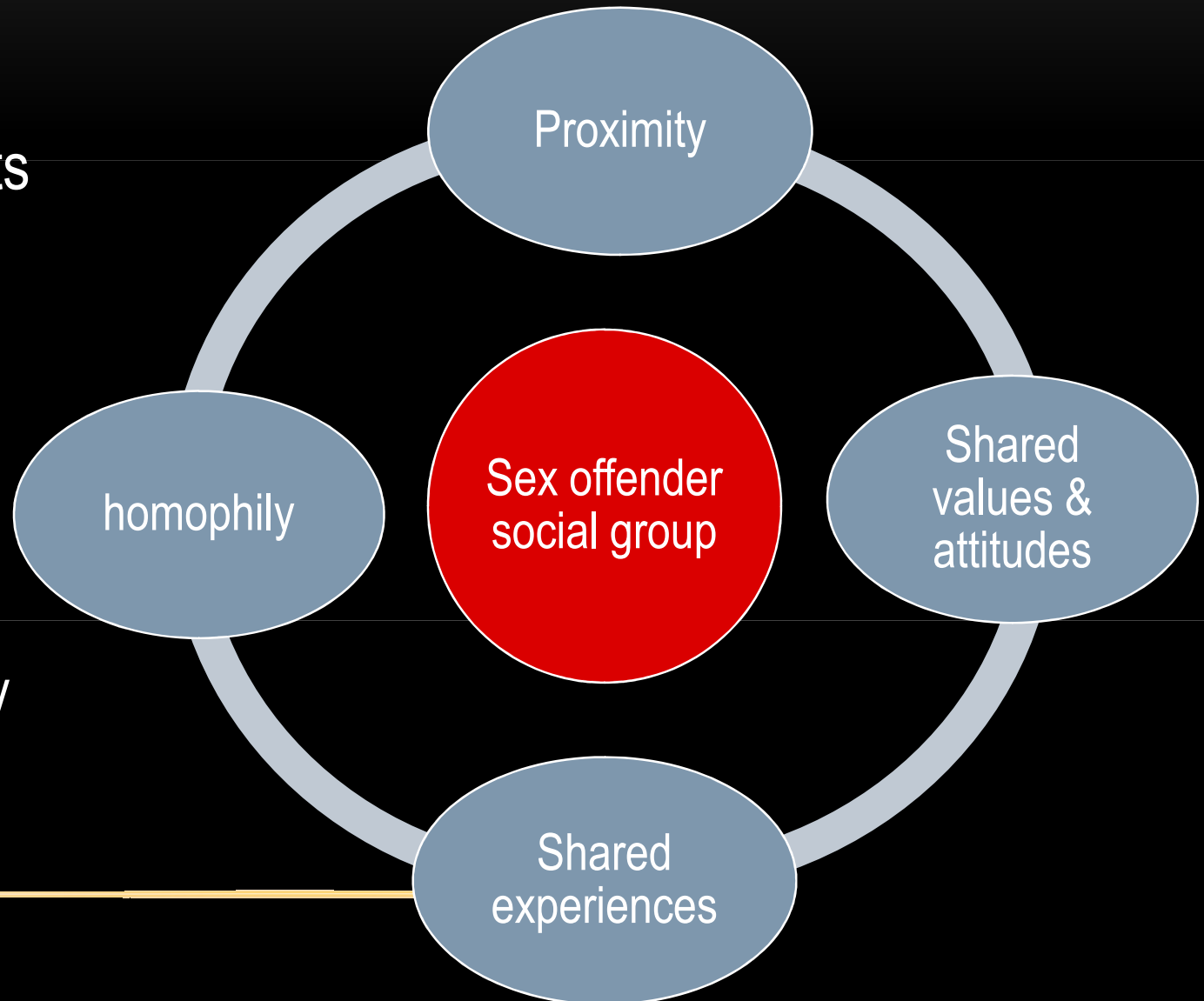
- Immersive group identity supported:
  - resistance to offence-based work
  - Neutralisations & cognitive distortions
  - Construction of themselves as a sex offender
  - Construction of sex offenders as not 'criminal'
- “you listen to these men [...] justifying it to themselves over all this time.[....] they sound more convincing. And they are there *all* the time. Not just once a week or whatever. (Jim, csa)
- Emotionally & practically supportive network
  - Potentially pro-social



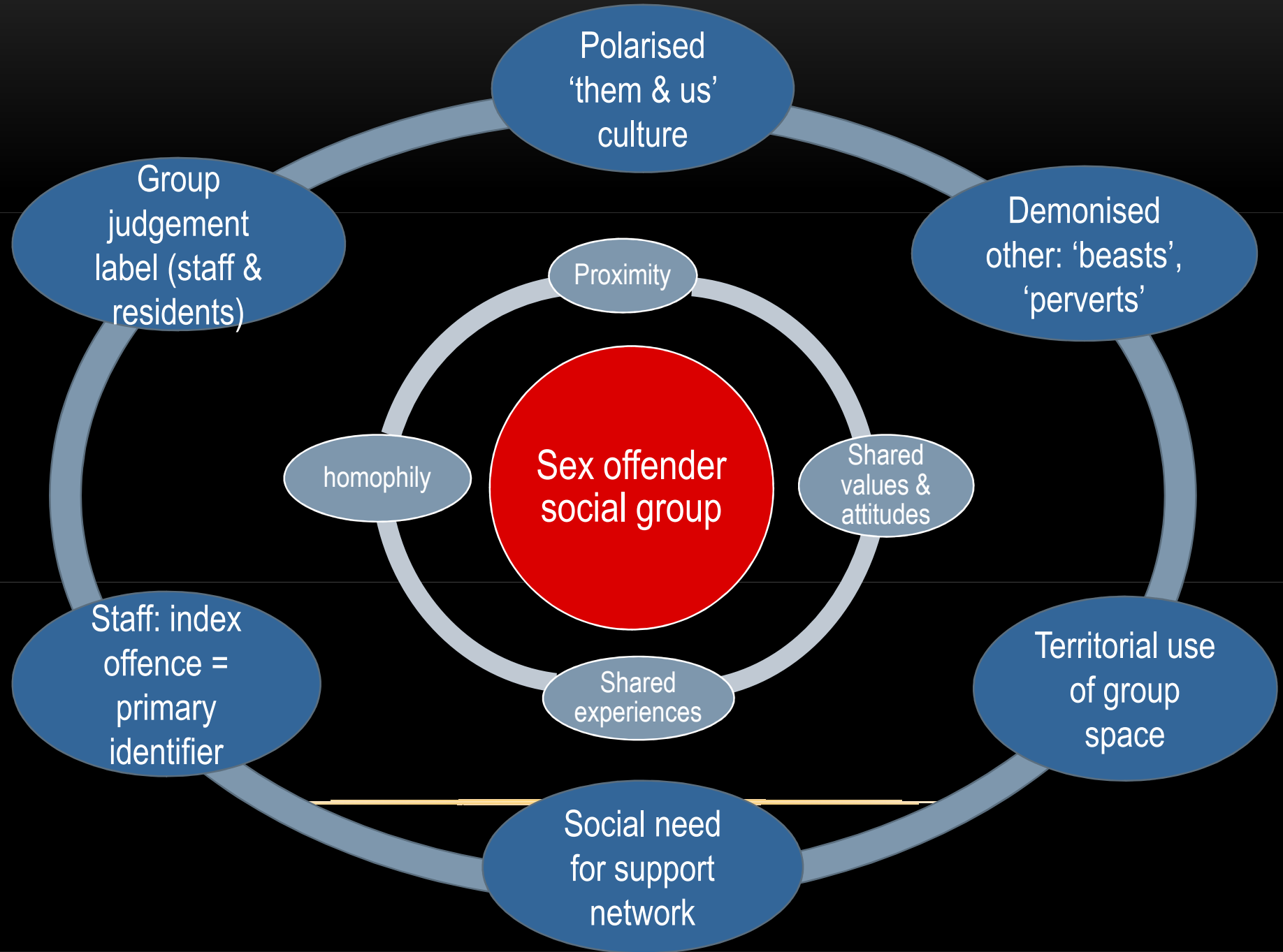
# Structural impact on grouping:

- Structural constraints of mandated:

- Accommodation
- SOGP
- Communal living space
- Admissions policy



# Cultural impact on grouping:



# Conclusions:

- Sex offender informal group is the most influential factor in determining individual's response to hostel work & their self-concept
  - Negative effect in this study
  - The demonised other
- Grouping by sex offenders tends to be seen as a risk-indicative active choice, but...
  - Like anyone else, feel the need to have a socially support network around them
  - ~~Structurally & culturally constrained in their social networks~~
  - Staff & hostel work also contribute to grouping pressures

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